

Only four perfins from New Mexico? It ain't necessarily so!

By Bob Combs (#24L)

How many perfin users are listed in the latest *Catalog of United States Perfins by Location* for your state? One? Fifty? A hundred? More? This question and its subsequent answer have led me to rethink just what constitutes a state-related perfin pattern.

I live in the southwest, in the 47th state to be admitted to the Union: New Mexico (Yes, Martha, contrary to uninformed telephone operators and occasionally UPS, New Mexico is a STATE, and NOT part of Old Mexico!).

According to Adele Ottenheimer's *Catalog of United States Perfins by Location* there are a total of four (count 'em!) existing perfin patterns that fall into (under?) this state: two in Albuquerque (C242.5 and N113AB-O), one in Santa Fe (T34), and one in someplace called Mesilla Park—down by Las Cruces—(F70). Four, hmmm, that seems like a "doable" collection. Agreed! I will start my vast New Mexico collection today!



As I gobbled up the four perfins for my collection, a thought crossed my mind: something was amiss!

What about the railroads that crisscross the state? They had perfins! Both the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe (AT&SF for you purists) operate many miles of track in New Mexico. Hmmm, maybe I should look into those? Indeed I should!

As I looked into the matter, it became apparent that as the local railroad offices in the state needed postage stamps they simply filled out an order form and it was sent off to corporate to process. The stamps were ordered from and supplied by the main offices, so they came back with perfins perforated therein!

This little bit of thinking opened up a larger number of perfin possibilities than one had thought! Every depot operated by these railroads was now a potential perfin user! To take this one step further, every mail train that ran through the state that processed their bags of mail, was also now a source of New Mexico related RPO/perfin possibilities!

Does it get any better? Actually, yes! Read on.

What about perfins that were used in the state, but didn't have offices here? I found two covers in my collection that substantiate this as well. A Union Pacific (U62) used on a UP Bus Lines Postcard postmarked in Grants, New Mexico (as a result of a passenger getting off the train there to mail the postcard she had picked up in Denver at the UP counter)! A customer returned his insurance company-supplied business return card with a Springfield Fire & Marine (S125.5) perfin postmarked in Encino, New Mexico!

I think you see where this is going. My New Mexico state collection has now grown to a total of 12 perfin patterns known to have been used from here, and the possibilities are really endless.

For those keeping score, here are the known New Mexico perfins: C252.5, F70, N113AB-O, S121, S122, S123, S125.5, S215, S215A, S216, T34, and U62.

In summation, if one looks a little deeper into the matter I'll bet you can come up with a LOT MORE perfins from your state to collect. Postmarks can be found on stamps, either complete or in a portion large enough to identify the town. So, get into those stacks of duplicates and look through them one more time. You never know what you might find. Maybe your state collection can increase three fold or beyond.